

Truth Squad - Investing In Medicare

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The Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act Improves and Protects Medicare for Seniors and People with Disabilities.

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TRUTH SQUAD: INVESTING IN MEDICARE

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WASHINGTON,
D.C. - The Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act Improves and Protects Medicare for Seniors and People with Disabilities.

Republicans in Congress are attempting to scare seniors and people with disabilities. At the request of lobbyists and private insurance companies, they falsely claim the Children's Health and Medicare Protection (CHAMP) Act cuts Medicare's benefits to pay for kids' health care.

The truth is that CHAMP invests tens of billions in Medicare, guaranteeing access to doctors, improving the program's benefits, extending its solvency, and protecting Medicare from privatization. The bill:

PRESERVES ACCESS TO CARE FOR MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES by investing more than \$67 billion in physician services. Absent Congressional action, drastic cuts in reimbursement may lead physicians to stop seeing Medicare patients. Thanks to years of Republican neglect, the physicians who serve Medicare's beneficiaries were before CHAMP set to experience a 10 percent per service pay cut in 2008 and a five percent cut each year thereafter.

IMPROVES PREVENTIVE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

by investing more than \$8 billion to eliminate all co-payments and deductibles for preventive services and provide parity for outpatient mental health services in Medicare. Among the preventive services made available to seniors at no cost are mammographies, prostate cancer screening, and colonoscopies.

PROVIDES FINANCIAL HELP TO LOW-INCOME BENEFICIARIES

by investing more than \$41 billion to expand asset limits that prevent seniors and people from disabilities from enrolling in the Medicare Prescription Drug Low-Income Subsidy Program and the Medicare Savings Programs that help pay for Medicare's drug costs, co-payments, and deductibles.

PROTECTS SENIORS ENROLLED IN PART D PLANS

by investing more than \$1 billion to enable beneficiaries adversely affected by private plans's formulary changes to change plans, allow coverage of benzodiazepines for mental health and require coverage of six therapeutic classes of drugs that help seniors with mental illnesses, AIDS, or who have had transplants.

EXTENDS THE LIFE OF THE MEDICARE TRUST FUND BY THREE YEARS according to Medicare's Chief Actuary.

ALLOWS PRIVATE PLANS TO REMAIN IN MEDICARE

by providing for payment equity between "Medicare Advantage" and Medicare fee-for-service. When private plans first came into Medicare, they promised to provide Medicare's benefits cheaper than the government and were paid at 95% of the fee-for-service rate. Several years ago, America's Health Insurance Plans President Karen Ignagni argued plans would "like to see parity...(either) exactly the same or closer to 95 percent." Though Republicans today falsely claim payment equity would eliminate private plans from Medicare, AARP recently announced its intent to provide a "Medicare Advantage" plan with UnitedHealth after payments are equalized.

PAYS FOR ITSELF.

In the last six years, President Bush and Republicans in Congress turned record surpluses into record deficits and added more than \$1.2 trillion to the national debt. CHAMP, on the other hand, abides by Democratic pay-as-you-go rules. It adds nothing to our debt while providing health care to kids and improving and protecting Medicare for seniors.